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MEASURES TO INCREASE HUNGARIAN LIVESTOCK

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

The initial resistance and mistrust which met artificial insemination in Hungarian animal husbandry after World War II are being overcome by the excellent results achieved in this field. The network of artificial insemination stations which now covers only a small part of the country, is being extended and developed.

Artificial insemination permits considerable savings by reducing the number of male animals required in breeding. While one stallion is needed for naturally fertilizing 70 mares per year, 200-300 mares may be fertilized artificially with the semen from one stallion. At the Kecskemet artificial insemination station, 814 colts were produced by two groups of horses, consisting of 651 mares and 8 stallions, and 317 mares and 9 stallions, respectively.

Even fewer males are required for cattle. A bull can serve approximately 80 cows during one year, while in artificial insemination the semen from one bull is sufficient for fertilizing 500-1,000 cows.

The smallest ratio of males is required in producing sheep. While one ram is able to serve 40-50 ewes in a year, only one ram is needed for the artificial insemination of 800-1,200 ewes. In exceptional cases in the USSR, the semen from one ram was used for the fertilization of 15,000 ewes, producing 18,000 lambs.

Artificial insemination also can help improve breeds of animals by using semen from only the most desirable types of males. At present, approximately 3,000 stallions are needed for the natural breeding of horses in Hungary. Hungary's horse breeding has not yet recovered from the effects of World War II and lacks the desired pedigree strains. With artificial insemination, only 500-600 stallions would be required. The situation is similar for cattle and sheep.

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At Kisber, in addition to performing natural insemination, highly valued pedigreed stallions supply semen for improving the horse stocks of small peasants in the locality. Previously, pedigreed colts had never been produced by small peasants.

Contrasted to natural insemination, the number of offspring produced by one male in one or two years by artificial insemination is sufficient for determining whether it is desirable to continue breeding that particular type. Also, males of desirable types may be used for insemination much longer.

Several diseases connected with reproduction in animals cannot be spread by artificial insemination, such as bangs disease (contagious abortion), breeding lameness [sterility?], granular vaginal catarrh, etc.

Artificial insemination has implications for animal hygiene since a thorough genital inspection by veterinarians precedes the operation. Only healthy animals are fertilized. Animals with diseased organs are treated by veterinarians at the artificial insemination stations and are fertilized only when cured.

All insemination and handling are performed free of charge. Best results in artificial insemination, however, can be obtained only with the support of the animal breeders in such things as delivering animals to the station when they are in gestation, and returning animals for pregnancy examinations.

URGE INCREASED SHEEP YEANING

To increase Hungary's sheep stock rapidly, it will be necessary to convert to three yeannings every 2 years. Mating should be readjusted to take place in June, January, and September. However, according to experience and scientific determination, the Hungarian type Merino is not in heat at those times.

A note of concern has arisen on sheep farms that, with conversion from the present system of April - May yeanning to the new system of mating in June, milking will be impossible, and this year's milk yield will have to be sacrificed.

However, such concern is not necessary. Lactation is not a barrier to rutting and conception. This is proven by shepherds on large sheep farms who for years have been milking ewes while rams were mixed in with the flocks, and who mated sheep while newly delivered ewes were lactating.

In no domestic animal does lactation hinder rutting and conception. Mares, cows, sows, and she-goats will rut and conceive while the young are of suckling age or are being weaned. Ewes may be milked through the month of June, even when rams are in the fold.

The occasional rutting of ewes in June and July may be due to lax feeding and care of the sheep. Hard driving of sheep and very hot weather are not favorable to rutting. Every kilogram of ewe's milk is important, and proper feeding and care of sheep should be observed in order to induce lactation and rutting.

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